



Quality Growth Commission

2018 Annual Report

LeRay McAllister Critical Lands Conservation Fund

In the 2017 General Session, the Utah State Legislature appropriated \$500,000 to the LeRay McAllister Critical Lands Conservation Fund to assist in preserving or restoring open land for wildlife habitat, cultural or recreational use, watershed protection, and agricultural production. This funding has been used to solicit valuable projects from across the state. The total request from all applicants totaled \$781,800 in funding (though one project eventually withdrew its application). Ultimately, \$281,800 was awarded to three projects that will leverage a total of nearly \$4.4 million dollars in total project costs – over \$16 leveraged for every state dollar invested. These conservation dollars will help ensure future recreation access to both a world-class national park and a close-to-home urban trail network, provide flood mitigation, preserve working agricultural lands, preserve critical habitat for key wildlife species (including sage grouse), leave undeveloped parcels in pristine watersheds, and preserve the scenery and wide open spaces that contribute to Utah's high quality of life. Each of these projects involved willing land owners who contributed to the projects' success. The following are the successful projects from the 2017 funding cycle:

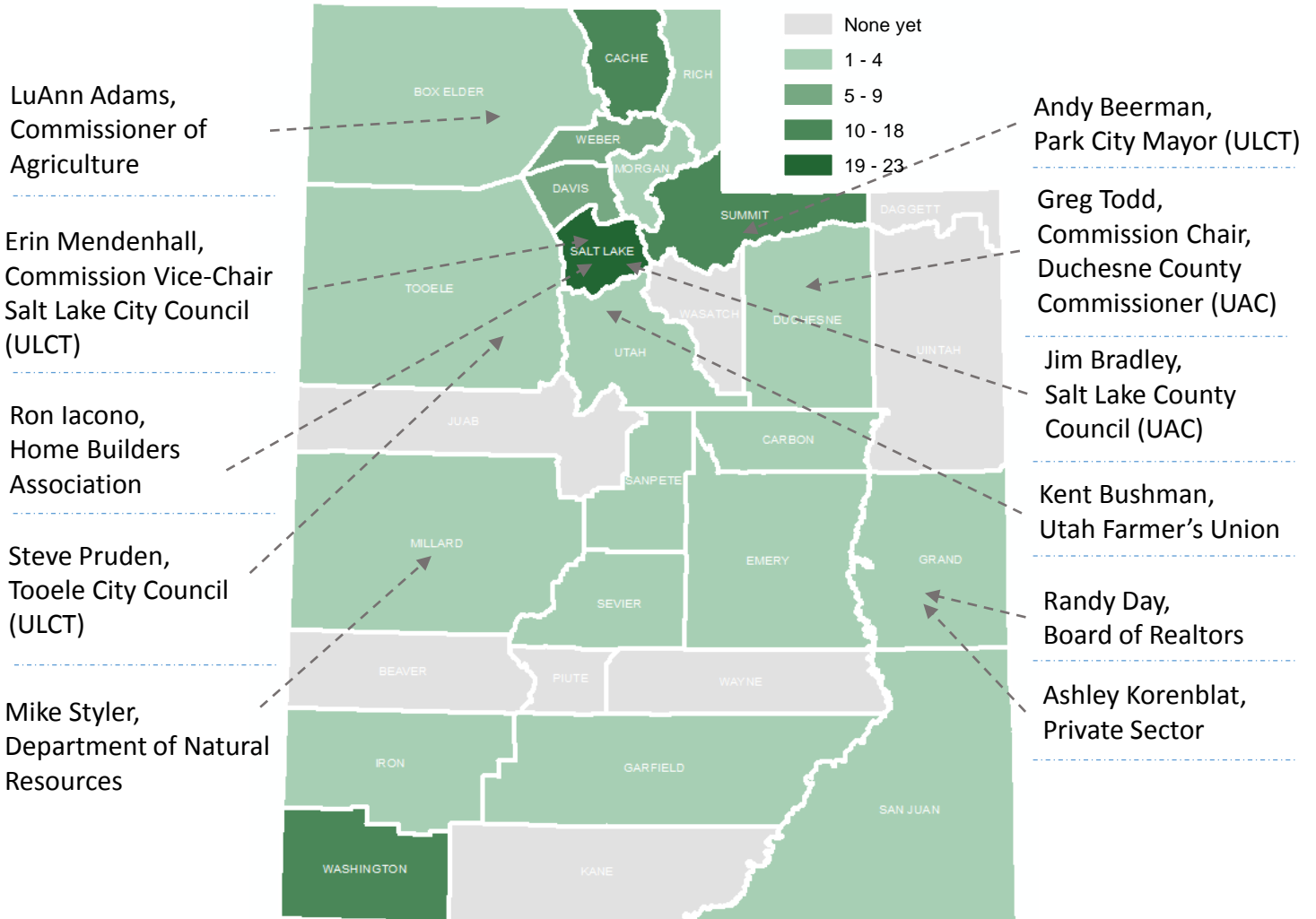
- Simon Gulch – Washington County
- Weber River Parkway – Weber County
- Wright Ranch – Summit County

During the 2018 Legislative Session, no new funding was allocated to the LeRay McAllister Critical Land Conservation Fund – limiting the amount of conservation work the Commission could accomplish. However, interest in the program has remained strong and the Commission is committed to working with land owners, conservation groups, and local governments to determine where targeted, strategic conservation needs merit a request for state funding.

Extraterritorial Jurisdiction and Watershed Protection

During 2016 and 2017, the Quality Growth Commission spent several meetings highlighting some potential issues regarding extraterritorial jurisdiction (as defined in UCA 10-8-15) and the current and potential conflicts that may arise as more cities reach first class status through population growth. The Commission for the Stewardship of Public Lands requested that the Quality Growth Commission draft recommendations to the Legislature regarding this issue in the Wasatch Canyons. After months of reviewing and discussing the topic and recognizing that the depth and complexity of this issue would require expert knowledge on many diverse topics such as water quality, water rights, property rights, and forest health - in addition to thorough public participation, the Quality Growth Commission ultimately recommended that the Legislature appoint a body of subject-matter experts who could provide a more rigorous analysis of the diverse and complicated issues involved in this complex issue. During the 2018 Session, the Legislature crafted language that tasked the Department of Natural Resources to convene these groups of subject-matter experts to continue the dialogue and ultimately draft recommendations. Throughout the summer, these subgroups have been crafting recommendations to present during Fall interim meetings. Some of the preliminary recommendations include seeking state and local funding to purchase and conserve properties with limited economic viability due to watershed protection requirements.

Statewide Commission, Statewide Impact



Current Commissioners and Projects Funded by County

113
Projects

23
Counties

>93K
Acres

Since 1999, the Quality Growth Commission has used \$21.9 million from the LeRay McAllister Critical Lands Conservation Fund to leverage nearly \$200 million to preserve or restore lands in 23 of Utah's 29 Counties. Over 93,000 acres of critical wildlife habitat, floodplains, and prime agricultural lands have been preserved across 113 projects. As in the past, current Commissioners bring a wealth of experience, expertise, and geographic and political diversity to the table as they work to prioritize the most beneficial projects from throughout the state.